HQ
766
S225w
1922

Woman, Morality and Birth Control

By

MARGARET SANGER

Price 20 Cents

Published by

The American Birth Control League, Inc.
104 Fifth Avenue, New York City

HQ 766 S225w 1922

02610550R

NLM 05017663 7

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

LIBRARY

FOUNDED 1836

WASHINGTON, D.C.

DUE TWO WEEKS FROM LAST DATE

APR 11 1969

[illegible] 1 1 1972

NOV 01 1997

Woman, Morality and Birth Control

By

MARGARET SANGER

Published by

THE AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE, INC.
104 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

X-E-P

HQ
766
S225w
1922

G
6 July 1922

Copyright
by
Margaret Sanger
1922

FOREWORD

The articles in the following pages were written for the *Birth Control Review* and published in various issues. There has been such a demand for these that I decided to put them together in booklet form.

—M. S.

396519

WOMAN, MORALITY AND BIRTH CONTROL

THROUGHOUT the ages, every attempt woman has made to strike off the shackles of slavery has been met with the argument that such an act would lower her moral standards. Suffrage was going to "break up the home." Higher education would unfit her for motherhood, and co-education would surely result in making her immoral. Even today, in some of the more backward countries reading and writing are stoutly discouraged by the clerical powers, because "women may read about things they should not know."

We know that there never can be a free humanity until woman is freed from ignorance, and we know, too, that woman can never call herself free until she is mistress of her own body. Just so long as man dictates and controls the standards of sex morality, just so long will man control the world.

Birth control is the first important step woman must take toward the goal of her

freedom. It is the first step she must take to be man's equal. It is the first step they must both take toward human emancipation.

The twentieth Century can make progress only by fighting the superstitions and prejudices created in the Nineteenth Century—fighting them in the open with the public searchlight upon them.

The first questions we must ask ourselves are: Are we satisfied with present day morality? Are we satisfied with the results of present day standards of morality? Are these so satisfying that they need no improvement?

For fourteen years I worked as a nurse in the factory and tenement districts of New York City. Eight years ago I was called into a home where the father, a machinist by trade, was earning eighteen dollars a week. He was at that time the father of six living children, to all appearances a sober, serious and hard-working man. His wife, a woman in the thirties, toiled early and late helping him to keep the home together and the little ones out of the sweatshops, for they were

both anxious to give their children a little schooling.

*Two years ago I came across this same family, and found that five more children had been added in the meantime to their household. The three youngest were considered by medical authorities to be hopelessly feeble-minded; two of the older girls were prostitutes; three of the boys were serving long term sentences in penitentiaries, while another of the children had been injured by a fall and so badly crippled that she will not be able to help herself for years to come.

Out of this family of eleven children only two are now of any use to society, a little girl of seven, who stays at home and cares for the crippled sister during the day while the mother scrubs office floors, and a boy of nine who sells chewing gum after school hours at a subway exit. The father has become a hopeless drunkard, of whom the mother and children live in terror.

This is but one illustration of the results of our present day morality. Here

* This article was written in 1916.

was an opportunity for society to develop and preserve six children for human service; but prudery and ignorance added five more to this group, with the result that two out of eleven are left fit to struggle against pauperism and charity. Will they succumb?

Another case I should like to cite shows how shallow is the concern of society in regard to the over-crowded tenements, where thousands of little children occupy sleeping quarters with parents and boarders whose every act is visible to all. Morality indeed! Society is much like the ostrich with its head in the sand. It will not look at facts and face the responsibility of its own stupidity.

I recall the death-bed scene, when the patient, a woman of twenty-six, passed away during the birth of her seventh child. Five out of the seven were girls, the eldest being about ten years old. Upon the death of the woman, this girl began to assume the duties of her mother and continued to keep the four men roomers who had lodged in their home for years. A few years later, I found this

girl suffering from the ravages of syphilis, although she had only just entered the period of puberty. She told me she could not remember when she had not dressed and undressed before the roomers, and on winter nights she often slept in their beds. She was already old—old in ignorance, in vulgarity, in degeneracy.

Another womanhood blighted in the bud, battered by ignorance, another soul sunk in despair.

These five girl-women did not ask society to fill their minds, as it was willing to do, with a useless knowledge of Greek, Latin or the Sciences. But they did need and unconsciously demand the knowledge of life, of hygiene and sex psychology which is so prudishly and shamefully denied them. No doubt these five sisters will soon represent the ruins of an ancient prejudice, and five more derelicts will be added to that particular relic heap of humanity.

Again, is there anything more sickening to truth than the attitude of society toward that catch phrase "Sacred Motherhood?" Take another illustration

and lay bare the living facts and view them for a while.

Two sisters lived in an upstate town, members of a large family, where the older daughters worked in factories, in order that the younger girls might have educational advantages. The youngest fell in love with a good-for-nothing fellow, with the result that she had an illegal child. Disgrace, ostracism and remorse drove her out into the world, and together with her baby she drifted from house to house in the capacity of a servant, until finally the baby died, leaving the mother free to enter upon another vocation. During this time, however, due to the condescending treatment accorded to her by the women who employed her, she had become so accustomed to look upon herself as an outcast that soon, with other companions of her own frame of mind, she began trafficking . . . on the streets of New York.

Now, the second sister, a few years older, also fell in love with one of the "town heroes," and came to grief; but owing to the "disgrace" of the youngest

sister and sympathy for the elder members of the family, who were completely anguish-stricken over this second mishap, the old family physician took her in charge and sent her to a place where an illegal operation was performed upon her. She returned, a sadder but wiser girl, to her home, finished the high school course, and several years later she became the principal of a school.

Today she is one of the most respected women in that county. She devotes her life outside school hours to a sympathetic understanding of the needs of young boys and girls, and her sordid early experience, put to good use, has helped many boys and girls to lead clean lives.

These cases represent actual modern conditions. Our laws force women into celibacy on the one hand, or abortion on the other. Both conditions are declared by eminent medical authorities to be injurious to health. The ever ascending standard and cost of living, combined with the low wage of the young men of today, tend toward the postponement of marriage.

Has the knowledge of birth control, so

carefully guarded and so secretly practiced by the women of the wealthy class —and so tenaciously withheld from the working women—brought them misery? Rather, has it not promoted greater happiness, greater freedom, greater prosperity and more harmony among them? The women who have this knowledge are the women who have been free to develop, free to enjoy in its best sense, and free to advance the interests of the community. And their men are those who motor, who sail yachts, who legislate, who lead and control our destinies. The men, women and children of this class do not form any part whatever in the social problems of our times.

Had this class continued to reproduce in the prolific manner of the working people in the past twenty-five years, can human imagination picture what conditions would be today?

All our problems are the result of over-breeding among the working class, and if morality is to mean anything at all to us, we must regard all changes which tend toward the uplift and survival of the human race as moral.

Knowledge of birth control is essentially moral. Its general, though prudent, practice must lead to a higher individuality and ultimately to a cleaner race.

WHEN SHOULD A WOMAN AVOID HAVING CHILDREN?

IF ONE judges by the letters and personal inquiries that come to an advocate of Birth Control, the one thing that women wish to know more than any other, is how to escape the burden of too frequent child bearing. Next to that they are interested in the question of when a woman should avoid having children.

One who has examined the books bearing upon the latter subject is quickly brought to the conclusion that there has been a great amount of disagreement among so-called authorities in regard to this matter. Once it seemed that every one who discussed it, either from the standpoint of medicine, morals, social welfare or individual rights disagreed with everybody else who had attempted to give an answer.

Within the past few years, however, medical and social science have made such strides in this direction that it is now

comparatively easy to separate the worthwhile conclusions from those which are of doubtful value or plainly worthless. Those who have made a careful, scientific study of Birth Control are pretty well united upon the points which I shall set forth in this article. I do not give them as my own opinions so much as the result of investigation by others, which I have proved correct by my own studies.

There are many circumstances to be considered before one attempts to advise a woman who asks when she should avoid having children. When all is said and done, the answer is never the same in any two cases. There are certain things which the mother or prospective mother should know. Then she must decide for herself.

(1) *Generally speaking, no woman should bear a child before she is twenty-two years old. It is better that she should wait until she is at least twenty-five.* Not only is it desirable from the mother's viewpoint to postpone child bearing until she has attained a ripe physical and mental development, but it is all-important to the child. The best authorities agree that a child born when a woman

is twenty-five or older has the best chance of a good physical and mental equipment provided, of course, that the health of the mother is good.

(2) *Child bearing should be avoided within two or three years after the birth of the last child.* Common sense and science unite in pointing out that the mother requires at least this much time to regain her normal strength in order to give a new baby proper nourishment both before and after its birth. for the mother's sake it is sufficient to point out as does Findley in "Diseases of Women" that "frequent child bearing . . . almost certainly results in some sort of pelvic ailment."

(3) *By all means there should be no children when mother (or father) suffers from such diseases as tuberculosis, gonorrhea, syphilis, cancer, epilepsy, insanity, drunkenness or mental disorders. In the case of the mother, heart disease, kidney trouble and pelvic deformities are also a serious bar to pregnancy.*

Thousands of volumes have been written by physicians upon the danger to mothers and offspring of having children

when one or both parents are suffering from the diseases mentioned above. As authorities have pointed out in all these books, the jails, hospitals for the insane, poorhouses and houses of prostitution are filled with the children of such parents, while an astounding number of their children are either still born or die in infancy.

These facts are now so well known that they would need little discussion here, even if space permitted. Miscarriages, which are particularly frequent in cases of syphilis and pelvic deformities, are a great source of danger to the health and even to the life of the mother. Where either parent suffers from gonorrhea, the child is likely to be born blind. Tuberculosis in the parent leaves the child's system in such condition that it is likely to suffer from the disease. Childbearing is also a grave danger to the tubercular mother. A tendency to insanity, if not insanity itself, may be transmitted to the child, or it may be feeble-minded if one of the parents is insane or suffers from any mental disorder. Drunkenness in the parent or parents has been found to be

the cause of feeble-mindedness in the offspring and to leave the child with a constitution too weak to resist disease as it should.

(4) *No more children should be born when the parents though healthy themselves, find that their children are physically or mentally defective.* No matter how much they desire children, no man and woman have a right to bring into the world those who are sure to suffer from mental or physical affliction. It condemns the child to a life of misery and places upon the community the burden of caring for them, and probably of their defective descendants for many generations.

(5) *There should be no more children whenever the conditions of life and the uncertainty of livelihood make it improbable that the children can be given proper care, both as to their physical and mental needs.*

At least one child in every seven that dies in the United States perishes from malnutrition or some disease due to poverty. It is neither just to the baby, to the mother nor to the father, to bring into the world a child that is likely to lack

proper food, medical attention and healthful home surroundings. The want of these things inevitably brings disease and disaster to the child and a crushing burden to the parents, to say nothing of the burden to society at large. If there is not accorded to the infant the mercy of an early death, the jail, the poorhouse, and the house of prostitution have a great chance of claiming it. This is another point upon which medical and social authorities are now well agreed.

This, then, is the answer of science for all women generally. But I want to impress upon the mind of the reader who belongs to the toiling masses that women who labor, who do useful things in the world, have a special and exceedingly deep interest in Birth Control. Society, for ages past has been and still is indifferent to the needs of the worker's children. Every now and then some new law is passed which attempts or pretends to give the child of the worker some protection. Usually the protection amounts to so little that we might as well have been spared the mockery of it.

So I have no hesitancy in putting down

the following answers to the question:

When should a woman avoid having children? *If she is a working woman she should have no more children while society remains indifferent to the needs of her offspring and forces them to toil in mills and factories.*

"Industrial diseases" due to accident, overwork, lack of fresh air and lack of play, stunt both the mental and physical development of the child, which through the pressure of poverty at home, has been driven to coin its life into dollars.

The working woman should have no more children while the profit system exists, for it dictates where you shall live, and what you and your children shall eat and wear. In the case of the majority of workers it dictates too little food, adulterated food, food of inferior quality, shocking living quarters, exposure to disease and inadequate medical attention.

While there is a struggle between the forces of Poverty and Plenty the working woman should have no more children. Every child is likely to have to go into the mill or the factory and compete with its father and mother for its daily bread.

The workers will win their fight for better conditions, only when they cease to produce cheap labor for the labor market, and use Birth Control as the most immediate weapon for their emancipation.

The mothers of workers have made human life cheap with battalions of unwanted babies. As long as life is held thus cheap, society will continue to waste life prodigally in under-paid toil. It will not place a higher value upon the life and the health of the worker until the women of the working class make babies scarce.

Do not be deceived. Your children are commodities—they are bought and sold in industry. And the price of infants like the price of everything else, goes up when the commodity grows scarce.

The war has brought women into industry as never before. Poverty has driven them into the factory and the mill beside their fathers and brothers. It has taken their children with them.

All of the creative energy of womanhood, the maternal energy that is looked to for the renewal of the world, goes into

a sordid, dead, unfeeling machine. That is society's decision in the matter, and from it there is no appeal. But until Society permits woman to give to the bearing and rearing of children the maternal energy given her by Nature for that purpose, and *so long* as she must give it to a factory machine, she must for her own sake, for the sake of other workers, for the sake of the child, avoid bearing children.

ARE BIRTH CONTROL METHODS INJURIOUS?

ADVOCATES of scientific Birth Control are sometimes met with the absurd statement that such methods are injurious to the health of the woman. It is even asserted that they cause cancer and other disease and that they bring about sterility.

As applied to scientific Birth Control, these statements are both false and silly. In the light of the best authoritative information of the day, it can be unequivocally set down that modern Birth Control methods, properly employed, are not only not injurious but are often positively beneficial to the woman's health. The contrary is maintained for the most part by those who are mentally honest but uninformed or by such as are altogether prejudiced.

The clergy, bound to theological dogmas are usually opposed to Birth Control methods and are only too ready to accept any bald statement levelled against them.

A few physicians who are uninformed as to modern means of Birth Control, still incline to the opinion that they are injurious, but these physicians have in mind the earlier, cruder means of preventing conception.

Some of the persons who maintain that preventive measures are injurious are so ignorant of the whole subject that they oppose abortion and call it Birth Control. Still others believe that harmful drugs are given internally as contraceptives. They, of course, confuse abortives with the means of preventing conception. Anyone who knows about Birth Control knows that it would do away with abortions which occur in appalling numbers in America every year.

One commonly practiced method of preventing conception is not only uncertain but beyond all doubt injurious to the woman's health. This is the one which, because of the withholding of scientific information upon the subject is most commonly used. It was perhaps the earliest method known and was condemned by the wise men among the ancient Jews, being anathematized in the Bible in a

very specific fashion. Modern science sometimes calls it Onanism from the name of the Biblical character who, we are told, was signally punished for practising it.

Until recent years it was supposed that this method was injurious to the man alone, but it has been discovered that the man in many cases seems to suffer no ill effects, while the woman's health may actually be wrecked.

Mantegazza believes that organic disease of the spinal cord may follow this practice. Hirt says that it may lead to neurasthenic disorders. Eulenberg is of much the same opinion. Valenta declares that it is one of the chief causes of chronic neuritis. Kleinwachter says that its harm to the system of the woman is by no means trivial. Still other great authorities who have pointed out the dangerous effects of the practice are Forel, Von Krafft-Ebing, Mensinga, Freud, Lowenfeld, Elischer and Ellis.

"The lack of sexual satisfaction" says Kisch, as a sort of final word upon the subject, "aggravates nervous and hysterical troubles in women, while suitably

regulated intercourse with mutual satisfaction has an actively beneficial effect."

This method, then, in the opinion of the best informed of modern Birth Control advocates is unscientific, and dangerous. In the same class so far as being unscientific and injurious to the health is continence, much advocated but little practiced. This subject will be considered in a later article as will the question whether scientific Birth Control methods are certain. For the present it is enough to point out that scientific Birth Control methods exclude those which are either uncertain or injurious and that the advocates of Birth Control stand for the dissemination of knowledge which will permit mothers to limit their families in a sane, scientific, healthful way.

The first essential in Birth Control is cleanliness and a sane observance of the principles of sex hygiene. These factors alone, taught to a woman, ignorant of the proper care of her physical functions until she sought knowledge of Birth Control, have restored many to health and have even disposed of many cases of sterility. It is the consensus of modern

medical opinion not only that scientific Birth Control methods are not harmful but in thousands of cases very beneficial to women suffering from leucorrhea, inflamed cervix and other local disturbances.

Among the objects of attacks by opponents of Birth Control are cleansing, antiseptic solutions, and the like. It is to be remembered that these are not preventives and are not to be depended upon as such. As the term indicates, an antiseptic is designed for and serves certain medical purposes. Its function when applied to the reproductive organs of a woman is medicinal or hygienic, not the prevention of conception. Injuries to women from the use of antiseptics result from ignorance or lack of proper directions, as would be the result if such solutions were improperly applied to a wound or a surgical incision.

Mechanical means have also been attacked, it being alleged that they cause cancer. Mechanical devices worn too constantly might produce irritation and cause trouble. A number of new devices have not yet been sufficiently tested to

make an opinion as to their harmlessness possible at this time. And dangerous devices will be employed or devices misused as long as law and custom deny to woman knowledge of scientific means of determining the number of her children and the time of their birth.

A glance at statistics disposes of the contention that Birth Control is responsible for the development of cancer. The implication which the opponents of Birth Control seek to leave is that as the birth rate falls because of the use of contraceptives, the cancer rate rises. The contention is sheer nonsense. As far back as 1876 before the birth rate began to fall, the cancer rate began to rise. Moreover, it is only among women who have reached the age of 65 that the increase is noted. It seems probable that women above 65 have not used contraceptives, as they were not so widely known during the child-bearing days of women even now at that age. And if they had been known, it would seem very unlikely that a contraceptive used during their child-bearing period would cause cancer twenty years afterwards. Nor is this all—fur-

ther light on this particular absurdity is that no increase in the rate of cancer affecting women's reproductive organs has been noted.

Statistics of several countries throw still more light upon the preposterousness of the contention. Ireland has had an increasing cancer rate for twenty years with a constant birth rate. Birth Control certainly is not responsible there. For five years of diminishing birth rate due to the application of scientific Birth Control, Holland has shown also a *decrease* in the cancer rate. France, where Birth Control methods are in wide use, had a cancer mortality of only .76 per thousand, as against .95 in England and Wales, where the birth rate was 28 per thousand at that time.

The assertion that Birth Control methods induce sterility is equally ridiculous. Many a woman, through the use of scientific contraceptives has so toned up and strengthened her reproductive organs as to become capable of child bearing when she would otherwise have continued barren. Where sterility has been laid to contraceptives, physicians

have discovered in nearly every case conclusive proof of some condition in the woman or her husband which would have prevented children under any circumstances. In thousands of cases where women have practiced scientific Birth Control for five, ten and even twenty years, they have later borne strong, healthy children. Usually the child is stronger in such cases because the mother has waited until her health is at its best and the family means are such as to give the baby the proper care, before and after its birth.

Dr. William J. Robinson's challenge, issued several years ago, still remains unanswered. "I challenge," said he, "any physician and gynecologist to bring forth a single authenticated case in which disease or injury resulted from modern methods of prevention."

The gist of the matter then is this: scientific Birth Control is not only harmless but often a direct benefit to the health. Unscientific contraceptives are as likely to harm their users as any other unscientific thing applied to or used in connection with any part of the body.

The plain conclusion is that with the health of the womanhood of America at stake, the mediæval laws and customs which prevent full and free dissemination of information concerning scientific Birth Control should be sent to the scrap heap along with the rack, the thumb screws and other outworn instruments of torture.

Besides being harmless and of positive benefit locally, scientific Birth Control methods have a much more important function for the improvement of the health of women. Anyone who knows anything at all about the subject knows that the health of a woman who is the mother of two or three children born several years apart is better than that of the mother of many children who follow each other at periods of a year or two.

Nor is this all. The dread of undesired pregnancy is the nightmare of the lives of millions of women. To this cause and this cause alone is directly traceable the wrecking of the physical systems of many of them. Wille, a prominent authority quoted by Kisch,

asserts that "the continued fear of pregnancy will in most cases do more injury to the feminine system than all the preventive measures in the world."

No woman can be healthy or strong who lives continuously in fear. Moreover, it is a fact universally recognized by physicians that to a nervously weak woman, preventive measures are necessary and a number of them are even helpful in regaining her health.

The sooner these facts are understood, the sooner the laws against the spread of scientific Birth Control are abrogated and information concerning reliable and safe or beneficial contraceptives comes within the reach of all women, the quicker the question of the general health of women will be settled.

WASTING OUR HUMAN RESOURCES

ONE person in a half million, perhaps, has some sort of comprehension of the terrific rate at which we people of the United States are wasting our most precious resources. These particular resources are not rich soils, forests, mineral deposits and the like—though we waste those prodigally, too—but the lives of the people. So-called "natural resources" are of no use until they have been developed by the genius and skill of human beings. It is in the strength, genius and skill of the people that the real wealth of a nation lies. These qualities reflect themselves in health, happiness and longevity, as well as in ability to utilize natural resources, and these human assets we waste even more riotously than we do the assets which have come to us from the generous hands of Nature.

The sum total of this waste, expressed in dollars, runs into incalculable billions,

and this does not take into account the still more terrible sum of misery brought about by our present callous and unreckoning policy.

This condition will continue unabated while we have unlimited human resources to draw upon. We have wasted our "natural wealth" like a nation of "drunken sailors" and are only now beginning to make the first faint effort to conserve it for sound uses. We will go on destroying our human wealth in the same fashion until we come to the realization that this wealth also has its limitations. We shall then, in the natural course of things, make better and higher use of this wealth and become a truly great people. But we will do this only when, through Birth Control, we have limited the supply of human beings and have brought to their senses those who are content now to waste human lives like chaff.

In *National Vitality, Its Wastes and Conservation* (Fisher), which is Senate Document No. 416 of the Sixty-first Congress, it is shown that "in the United States there are probably at all times

about 3,000,000 persons seriously ill, and every day 1,700 unnecessary deaths." It does not take long to discover that the loss of the productive time of these 3,000,000 sick persons, most of whom, perhaps, are suffering from the diseases recognized as preventable, runs into the billions. And other sums of national wealth, equally staggering, are lost through the unnecessary deaths. Seventeen deaths each minute, and even computing each life as worth only $1,700 to the country, it means that the United States is wasting, in this item alone, nearly $3,000,000,000 a year. The conservation of these lives and the proper utilization of these human resources would pay off our national debt within a few years. If we could also apply to the national debt the cost of caring for the unnecessarily sick, the United States could very shortly face the world without a cent of financial obligation.

Of the 1,500,000 who die in the United States each year, according to the report quoted above, 150,000, or one in ten, are consumptives. One in six of the persons constantly and seriously ill is also suffer-

ing from tuberculosis. Of the 20,000,000 school children in the United States, one in ten will die of tuberculosis if they continue to die at the present rate, according to Lewis M. Terman, in a report of a medical survey of the Public School System of Oregon.

Yet the United States has never taken any serious measures to deal with the "white plague." There are associations of individuals who have been trying for years to arouse both the people and the governments of states and nation to this peril, but the terrible toll-taking goes on and the governments, which have both the power and the resources to grapple with the problem, still neglect to attack it in an effective manner. Meanwhile, except for more or less palliative state and local measures, the causes of tuberculosis are permitted to operate in full force. Save where labor unions have forced a shorter day, the hours of work continue to be so long as to exhaust completely the worker and expose his system to the attacks of the ever present scourge. The Fisher report calls attention to this fact thus: "The present working day,

from a physiological point of view, is too long, and keeps the majority of men and women in a continual state of over-fatigue."

An example of the extent to which individuals are permtited for their private profit to waste the vital resources of the nation through maintaining breeding places for tuberculosis and other diseases is that to which attention is called by Lawrence Veiller, in *Housing Reform,* issued by the Charities Publishing Company, of New York, in 1911. Said he: "In the lower East Side of New York City dwell 500,000 people, most of them immigrants. In 1910 there were over 10,000 tenements with 'air shafts,' furnishing neither sunlight nor fresh air."

During the year ending June 30, 1914, for example, there were admitted to the United States 1,250,000 immigrants, most of whom were compelled to seek the company of other millions who had come in other years, in communities where the housing conditions were often but little better than those described. While such conditions exist, there is little hope for curtailing either the sickness rate or the

death rate from tuberculosis in the United States.

Neither can there be hope of curtailment while 2,500,000 children are permitted to give up their strength in factories, or men are compelled to kill the tissues of their lungs in ill ventilated factories or in the "dusty trades" where the protection afforded them is too often inadequate when such protection is afforded at all.

Again, the tuberculosis toll cannot be reduced to its lowest level until women are educated in the use of contraceptives. Pregnancy renders tuberculosis fatal at certain stages and always aggravates it. Moreover, to continue to deny tubercular women the use of contraceptives means that every year there is a fresh crop of children coming into the world predisposed to the disease.

Tuberculosis is not the only disease that reaps a rich harvest from the 2,500,000 child laborers of the United States and from the weakly descendants of such laborers. The wearing out of the youthful body, the lack of recreation, the sapping of the basic forces of life,

brings all manner of diseases to these unfortunates and if they are not claimed by death, they bring another crop of human weaklings who in their turn become victims.

While the great war was in progress, the United States government took a most commendable step toward educating the people as to the danger of venereal disease. It was only a beginning, however, and if the tremendous waste of vital wealth is to be completely checked, direct and vigorous efforts must be made by state and federal agencies to arrest this scourge. Thus far, little appreciable has been done, except to patch up a few of the wrecks and send them forth, quite as likely as not, to communicate their diseases to others. Bulletin No. 8, issued in June, 1915, from the office of the Surgeon General of the United States Army, showed that one man in five of the class from which men were drawn for the army suffered from syphilis. It was estimated by Fisher, in the report referred to, that there are 2,000,000 syphiletics in the United States. Most of these syphiletics are perfectly at liberty to infect

others, if they are in the stage of the disease at which it is communicable. And the heritage of syphilis is the heritage of disease in manifold forms, ranging from insanity or total physical disability to general ill health. To say nothing of its huge total of physical and mental suffering, this disease alone represents financial loss to the nation of billions.

One of the expedients which we must inevitably adopt, in order that the problem of disease and its causes may be intelligently handled, is that of registering the sick. Physicians should be required to report all cases of serious illness each day. Simple records should be kept by departments of health. Thus, the health authorities would have at their disposition a mass of data that would enable them to plan and execute effective campaigns for the elimination of disease. The individual, seeking to improve his own health, could consult these records which would cover his health history from birth.

According to R. C. Richards, chairman of the Central Safety Commission, and to the Final Report of the (Federal) Com-

mittee on Industrial Relations, filed in 1915, there are 35,000 killed each year in industrial accidents and 700,000 injured. Again the cost in misery, maintenance of the injured and loss to the nation reaches an appalling total. As H. H. Moore points out in *The Youth and The Nation,* "this means that every day in the United States nearly 100 are killed in industry and nearly 2,000 are injured—that one man is killed every fifteen minutes and one is injured every minute, twenty-four hours a day." The explanation is lack of proper safeguards—a greed for private profit that is each minute of the day robbing the nation of untold wealth.

A still more far-reaching cause of loss of vital wealth than any yet mentioned is the want of the masses, with its terrible harvest of unhappiness, disease and crime. King, in his *Distribution of Wealth and Income,* estimates that "over 50 per cent. of the wealth of the United States is owned by only two per cent. of the people." Other authorities place the percentage of wealth owned by two per cent. of the people nearer to ninety per cent. Towne, in *Social Problems,* says

that there are probably 10,000,000 persons in the United States living in poverty, while there are 5,000,000 dependent upon some form of public relief. Senator Borah, who is a Republican presidential possibility, and who spoke presumably from the best figures that could be compiled from information in the Census Bureau, said in a speech in the United States Senate, August 24, 1917, that seventy per cent. of the families in the United States had an income of $1,000 a year or less and that a man supporting a family thus is an "industrial peon."

When these conditions prevail, what must be the terrible harvest of disease, crime, and weakened family stock, to produce through generations more and more disease and crime! This in itself is sufficient to wipe out a nation, but for fear these unfortunates may limit their numbers, the governments of the nation and of most of the states use all possible means to stop the spread of Birth Control information, which would automatically check the multiplication of this hardship and social loss.

Only two of the factors of national loss and racial weakness, springing out of a system that piles up huge fortunes on one hand and slums on the other, can be considered here. The census shows that in 1910 there were 100,000 children before juvenile courts, of which 14,000, mostly boys, were sent to so-called corrective institutions. It is well known that these boys are more than likely to go to penitentiaries or jail later on, owing to the influences surrounding them in reform schools.

As shown by the National Child Labor Committee in Pamphlet 276, juvenile delinquency increased thirty-four per cent. in Berlin during the war. It is hardly likely that the youth of the United States has shown a more favorable reaction, and the conditions as to juvenile delinquency are probably much worse than they were in 1910.

In 1910 also there were 11,498 persons in jails, penitentiaries and similar institutions in the United States—and most of these, as every student of sociology knows, come out stamped with disgrace and educated in crime.

The United States has yet to solve the problem of dealing with criminals and it has not yet learned either to stop creating them or to permit overburdened mothers to so limit their families that they will not bring into the world children who are in danger of becoming criminals.

As early as 1890 there were in the United States 400,000 feeble-minded persons, according to Goddard, in *Feeble Mindedness; Its Causes and Consequence.* This, taking into consideration the difficulty of detecting certain degrees of feeble mindedness, the tendency of families to conceal mental defects of their members, and the haphazard way in which statistics as to the feeble-minded are gathered, is probably a very low estimate, even thirty years ago. Be that as it may, something of the appalling result of permitting the perpetuation of mentally feeble strains is shown by two classical examples. When it is remembered that most of the feeble minded are free, either all their lives or at some time in their lives, to reproduce their kind, the situa-

tion takes on an ominousness that demands prompt and effective action.

Martin Kallikak, Jr., a feeble-minded man, married Rhoda Zabeth, a normal woman in 1803. They had ten children. From these children have come not less than 470 descendants, and of the progeny of Martin Kallikak, Jr., there were 143 feeble minded, 36 illegitimate children, 33 sexually immoral persons, mostly prostitutes, 24 confirmed alcoholics, 3 epileptics, 82 who died in infancy, 3 proprietors of houses of ill fame and 3 criminals. Birth Control would have been an inestimable blessing there, and even more of a blessing to the Jukes family.

There were 1,200 descendants of the founder of the Jukes clan in 75 years. Of these, 130 were professional paupers, who in all spent 2,300 years in poorhouses, 50 prostitutes, 7 murderers, 60 habitual thieves and 130 common criminals. One authority estimates that the loss of potential usefulness, cost of prosecutions, expense of maintenance and so on, for this family amount to $1,300,000 in 75 years.

There are thousands of Kallikaks and Jukeses at large in the United States to

perpetuate their kind. Social agencies, physicians and departments of health have much to answer for when they fail to tell women of such families how to avoid having children. Unfortunately, however, they encourage rather than discourage this multiplication of misery and social loss through the reproduction of such defectives as these.

There are several million women in industry in the United States. There are other millions who work quite as hard or harder in their homes. These women are potential mothers, when not already actually mothers, as is usually the case. Most of them are over-fatigued each day; most of them, perhaps, are already suffering from disease. They achieve little relief by their labors. As Nearing pointed out in *Wages in the United States* (1911), "probably two-fifths or more of the women wage earners earn less than $6 a week." Wages are higher now, but in most cases, the rising prices have outstripped the increase.

"It is now generally believed to be in accordance with the laws of hereditary descent," says Dr. Nathan Allen in the

Law of Human Increase, "that the mother, not the father, transmits the vitality and stamina, the strength of the physical system to the child. It becomes, then, vastly important that the mother herself have the right kind of constitution." The time is coming when we shall look back with horror upon our present policy of permitting the mother stamina to be killed by toil. We shall also wonder why we were blind enough to compel a mother incapable of transmitting strength to her children to bring such children into the world.

Can the nation endure with these great factors of destruction and waste operating unchecked? It cannot. It will die as other nations have died and give place to more vigorous peoples.

What is the remedy? Only this—to take our vast stock of human wealth in hand. We have wasted it prodigally because we have had an unlimited supply. We have had more than we could use in the highest way and to the best advantage. We have been content with quantity, rather than quality. Let it be repeated that we shall continue this course until we

resort to the limiting of our numbers—to Birth Control. When our numbers are cut down, these human resources will appear to us in their true light—as the most precious of all our possessions. We shall guard the health and the happiness of each individual for the service that he can render to himself and to the whole of society. We shall make the best possible use of our material. We shall conserve human vitality for constructive social uses. We shall guard it more zealously than we now guard our gold.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE ACCIDENTAL CHILD

THE first right of the child is to be wanted—to be desired with an intensity of love that gives it its title to being and joyful impulse to life. It should be wanted by both parents, but especially by the mother, who is to carry it, nourish it, and perhaps influence its life by her thoughts, her passions, her loves, her hates, her yearnings.

We have observed how strongly children inherit their mother's traits. Freud has told us of children so greatly influenced by their mothers as to be incapable of a mate love for anyone who does not resemble them. We are all familiar with the old wives' tale of children "marked" because of a mother's fright or other strong emotion, though we know little concerning the truth or falsity of this theory. Just as little do we know of the effect of fear, hate, yearning or disgust in the mother at the time of conception.

Until scientists give years of careful

study to the problem there will be no accurate information concerning it. At most we can only speculate upon it now. But since the life of the mother in its other phases, seems to affect the child so vitally, is it not probable that strong emotion at the time of conception, emotion which lingers and preys upon the mind of the mother in the months following, leaves its impress deeply if not indelibly upon the life of the child? And is it not time that scientists were making a direct and exhaustive study of a problem which may be fraught with so much of weal or woe for the race?

My personal opinion, founded upon observation as nurse and as a worker in the Birth Control movement, is that these emotions have a profound effect upon the child. I believe that the mother's fear of pregnancy has a most unhappy influence upon the life of her offspring. I believe that this fear and the unsuccessful practice of coitus-interruptus are responsible for the timidity, the fretfulness and feebleness of many infants.

Does it not stand to reason that no child can be what it should be, physic-

ally, mentally or spiritually, if it is conceived and carried by a mother to whom the embraces of her husband are repugnant? Can a mother who begins the creation of the little life in disgust and in disgust brings it to birth, bequeath to her baby the strength, the mental vigor or the disposition to happiness that is its inherent right? Can a mother whose very being is trembling in terrified submission or quivering with hate at the time of conception and who for months thereafter experiences a measure of these same emotions, bring her child forth as well equipped for the life struggle as it would otherwise have been? We know something of the effect of worry upon the mother's milk. What may we not yet discover concerning the effect of worry or even stronger emotions upon her blood that for nine months flows through the very being of the child?

Why the great number of feeble-minded children? Why the hosts of infants born too feeble to withstand the difficulties of the first year of existence? Why the weakling manhood and womanhood, too timid to make effective protest

against the great social wrongs and tyrannies which crush them?

Science has answered these questions in part, but only in part. I do not believe that they will be conclusively answered until account is taken of the condition of the mind of the mother from the moment of the creative embrace until the child is born.

The tragedy of the unwanted child—of the accidental child—only begins with whatever evil prenatal effect the emotional condition of the mother may have upon it. The right to be wanted is its first right but only the first of many that are ignored. Usually it suffers a further handicap by being carried by a mother who is physically ill or overworked. Fear of pregnancy is frequently inspired in the mind of the mother by the burden of too many children, or by want or by both. When it arrives, the accidental child usually finds itself in the ranks of the millions of hungry and neglected infants. Often it is merely a candidate for an item in the infant mortality statistics. We have before us always the

horrible spectacle of hundreds of thousands of children dying miserably before they have lived twelve months, of other hundreds of thousands dying just as miserably before they reach the age of five. Worse still, is the lot of those other millions who after the age of five take their places among the toilers in mills and factories.

What have we to offer those who do not go to the places of toil? To the majority of them, dwelling places too cluttered and crowded to be called homes. Schools that are crowded, in which "half time" is the sop of the state to the needs of childhood. Streets, filthy and crowded, as their playgrounds. And for some of them, finally, crowded jails and crowded institutions for the feeble minded. Crowded always, never breathing a free atmosphere and seldom a healthy one, from the beginning to the end of their monotonous lives, the hordes of unwanted children seldom have a chance to forget their unwanted state.

We hear a good deal of sentimentality about unfailing mother love. We are told that even these unwanted children

have *that* to protect them in their hard lots. But how few of the poorer women have the time and the strength to let mother love develop and express itself? We make a mistake in assuming that mothers are always kind. We forget that under the stress of caring for many children, under the strain of helping to earn bread for hungry mouths and clothing for bodies clothed in rags, the strongest mother love may turn bitter and cruel.

Is anything more horrible, more hopeless than the cruelty of a mother worried and tired to distraction? Oh, yes, there is much of it! If you doubt, go for a little while to live among the families whose mothers are overburdened with children, whose bodies and brains are worn threadbare with toil inside and outside the home. Unfortunately it is not only the hardhearted father of the story book who is cruel to the children—there is an appalling amount of cruelty from the mothers too.

Which of us has not seen such cruelty, even in the streets? A case significant only because it is of frequent occurrence came to my attention a few months ago.

A woman, evidently worn out by a day's work, was wheeling a child in a baby buggy in Fourteenth street. Another child, about three years old, was trudging at her side, clinging heavily to her skirt. It had on badly shaped, cheap shoes, which probably hurt its feet. It cried monotonously as it walked. The mother, apparently in frantic haste to reach home and prepare supper, doubtless for a husband and several other children—suddenly felt the drag of the weary, crying child. She struck it, first across one side of its little face and then the other. The tiny thing, surprised by the sudden attack, fell face downward upon the sidewalk. The furious, nerve-wracked mother, picked it up by the chin and struck it again and again on the back until a passer-by interfered. To a threat of arrest she retorted: "Oh, you shut up. This is my kid and I'll lick it when I want to."

Do you hesitate to believe that this happens often? It is common—as common, almost, as unwanted children. Of course, the mother later on rocks the child to sleep, covers its bruised face with

kisses and seeks to wipe out the memory of the blows in a flood of remorse. But the scars are there, in the mind of the child, if not upon its body. Our militarists and ecclesiastics who shout for more and more children, who speak of them as "blessings," shut their eyes tightly to this aspect of child life among the harassed poor.

*In France, where a knowledge of contraceptives is available to a large proportion of the working-class mothers, another typical scene is often witnessed. The mother arranges with her employer to leave her work for a time in order to fetch her child from school through the dangerous crossings and see it safely past the groups of older and rougher boys. Her attitude is almost invariably one of tenderness. The difference lies in the number of children. This French mother is not so badly overburdened and her child is the more precious to her because she has only the one, or two.

The child's right to a different lot from that depicted here is no longer questioned by thinking people. Many men

* Since the war France prohibits all Birth Control knowledge.

and women are now working to alleviate the burdens and sorrows of the army of unwanted infants. The material side of the child's life is bound to receive a certain amount of consideration now and in the future. Even the unwanted children are becoming fewer. And the medical profession, even the church, the imperialist, and the employer of "hands"—all those who are in need of cheap and ignorant humanity—will see to it that children have better shelter and get more of the food and clothing necessary to their existence. This they will do in the interest of their own institutions.

Material rights of the child, however, are far more easy to enumerate and to obtain—when children are scarce—than are others of its rights which, for want of a better name, we may call spiritual. The awakening of the parents to these rights of the child, some of which have been indicated in the present article, must follow quickly upon the heels of its material rights.

The eugenist very correctly contends that the parents should be in good health, mentally and physically, when the child

is conceived. They do well to insist that it is the first material right of the child to be "well born." But have they taken into consideration all of the factors?

From what deep spring of moral and spiritual weakness arises this huge stream of the cringing, the suppliant, the submissive? Whence come the natures of these millions of human beings who are but timorous pawns moved hither and thither upon the chess board of existence by a few powerful hands?

Who can say that it is not because we come into life with the feeling, conscious or subconscious, *that we are not wanted —that we are accidents?* Who can say that it is not because we have graven upon our natures, the fear, the disgust, the loathing, the shrinking of our mothers? Men and women who have lived through the past four years,* in any country on the globe, know what it is to be pawns. Not all the power of the church, not all the teachings of Christianity, not all our education, our theories of right and wrong, availed the weak wills of the millions of "accidents," when

* Written in 1918.

a few tyrants plunged the civilized world into warfare.

When we people the earth with men and women who are not "accidents," these human holocausts cannot occur. When we have men and women whose wills, whose moral and spiritual natures have not been marred by fear and hate from the moment of conception, war will be impossible.

When we insist that conception be surrounded by its normal atmosphere of triumphant love and happiness, and thus infuse into the new life the spark of love, with its impulse to live, to love in its turn, to be strong, we shall have a new sort of humanity. There will be no more "dumb, driven cattle" in the guise of men. When we can visualize out of the surging love and happiness of the creative act the strong, healthy, happy, mentally and spiritually vigorous child, we shall produce individuals with intellectual and spiritual gifts beyond those of any race that has yet appeared upon earth.

Our imaginations are as yet too weak, too uninformed to portray to us the

strength, the beauty and the wonder of a humanity yet to be brought into being—through children created in the flame of love.

CHARITY?

NO!

SCIENCE

MARGARET SANGER'S

Latest Book—

THE PIVOT OF CIVILIZATION

(Introduction by H. G. Wells)

clearly indicates that this is not an age of sentimental charity, BUT one demanding a scientific solution for our social evils and a ban on our reckless and irresponsible child-bearing.

SEND $2.10 (covering postage) and procure a copy to-day.

Order from

BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

104 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

ARMY MEDICAL LIBRARY

WASHINGTON D. C. U. S. A.

NEW REVISED EDITION

What Every Girl Should Know

By

MARGARET SANGER

Here is an instructive book that will help you guide your girl or boy during the age when sex first manifests itself—the most fascinating, interesting and puzzling period of their lives—the budding period, called girlhood and boyhood.

This book has the endorsement of educators, clergymen, social workers and physicians.

PRICE, $1.60 (covering postage)

Order from

BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW
104 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

Do You Know Why

200,000 Copies have been *sold* of

WOMAN AND
THE NEW RACE

Because

MARGARET SANGER
in this book voices what these unhappy mothers cannot express themselves.

This is how hundreds of letters sent to her daily read:—

DEAR FRIEND OF MOTHERS:

Your book is wonderful and when the things you advocate come to pass, every one will be so much happier. It is terrible to have children you cannot provide for and are sickly. Etc.

ORDER TO-DAY!

PRICE, $2.10 (covering postage)

Order from

BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW
104 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

Did it Ever Occur to You

that *you* could help the hundreds of thousands of unfortunate mothers to know in this generation what it means to have healthy and happy children?

You can subscribe to the

Birth Control Review

the *only magazine in America* that *dares* to fight for the rights and privileges of

Liberated Maternity

SUBSCRIBE TO-DAY.
DO NOT DELAY!

BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW,
104 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

I enclose $2.00 for one year's subscription.

Name .....

Street .....

City..... State.....

(*Sample copies sent on request.*)

NOV 12 1946

HQ 766 S225w 1922

02610550R

NLM 05017663 7

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE